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Smarter Balanced Begins Pilot Test of Next-Generation Student Assessments

More than one million students slated to participate in first large-scale trial of online tests aligned to the Common Core State Standards

OLYMPIA, Wash.— Members of the [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium](http://www.smarterbalanced.org) (Smarter Balanced) today began administering a Pilot Test of the assessment system in schools across the country. The Pilot Test is the first of two large-scale tryouts of the assessments prior to implementation in the 2014-15 school year. Through the Pilot Test, Smarter Balanced will gather information about the performance of assessment items and the test delivery system under real-world conditions.

Participation in the Pilot Test is voluntary for schools. Smarter Balanced recruited approximately 6,000 schools as part of a scientific sample to ensure that data from the Pilot Test fully represents the Consortium. However, all schools in Smarter Balanced member states may register to participate in the volunteer portion by March 27. Additional information about the Pilot Test and a registration survey for schools is available on the Smarter Balanced website: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/pilot-test/>.

"The Pilot Test marks an important milestone on the road to developing next-generation assessments that teachers and parents can use to improve student learning," said Randy Dorn, Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Washington is a Smarter Balanced Governing State and the fiscal agent for the 24-state consortium. "Washington is participating in this effort because the successful implementation of Smarter Balanced assessments is a critical part of our plan to ensure that all students graduate high school ready for college and careers."

The Pilot Test will be conducted in grades 3-11 in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. While the Pilot Test will be administered online, it will not include the computer adaptive feature designed for the operational assessment in 2014-15. Data from the Pilot Test will allow Smarter Balanced to conduct initial scaling that will be used to program the adaptive test engine. Schools recruited as part of the scientific sample will administer one content area (either mathematics or ELA/literacy) in up to two grades. Schools that sign up to participate in the volunteer phase will have the flexibility to administer one or both content areas of the assessment to individual classrooms, full grades, or multiple grades.

"Students participating in the Pilot Test will experience innovative assessment items and performance tasks that assess the depth and breadth of the Common Core State Standards," said Joe Willhoft, Ph.D., executive director of Smarter Balanced. "This information will contribute to the development of thousands of additional assessment items and performance tasks that will be administered as part of the Field Test in early 2014 and will become part of the operational assessment system in the 2014-15 school year."

The Pilot Test is designed to be a test of the items and performance tasks—not an opportunity to report on student learning—and schools participating in the Pilot Test will not receive student scores. Prior to



taking the Pilot Test, students will have the opportunity to take a training test to become familiar with the format of the assessment.

Smarter Balanced content experts worked collaboratively with K-12 teachers and higher education faculty from Governing States to write and review items and performance tasks that appear in the Pilot Test. In addition, Smarter Balanced conducted more than 900 cognitive labs around the country in 2012. Through these one-on-one sessions, students provided valuable feedback on innovative item types, the test interface, and accessibility features. Small-scale trials in more than 500 schools in 23 states also provided critical information for the development of the Pilot Test.

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About Smarter Balanced

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium brings together states to create a common, innovative assessment system for mathematics and English language arts/literacy that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and helps prepare students for college and careers. The Consortium involves educators, researchers, policymakers, and community groups in a transparent and consensus-driven process to help all students thrive in a knowledge-driven global economy. The Consortium's projects are funded through a four-year, \$175 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, comprising 99 percent of activity resources, with the remaining support provided through generous contributions of charitable foundations. Membership is open to any interested U.S. state. For more information, please visit www.smarterbalanced.org.